

Who's Minding the (Data) Store?

Results of the NDSA Digital Preservation Staffing Survey

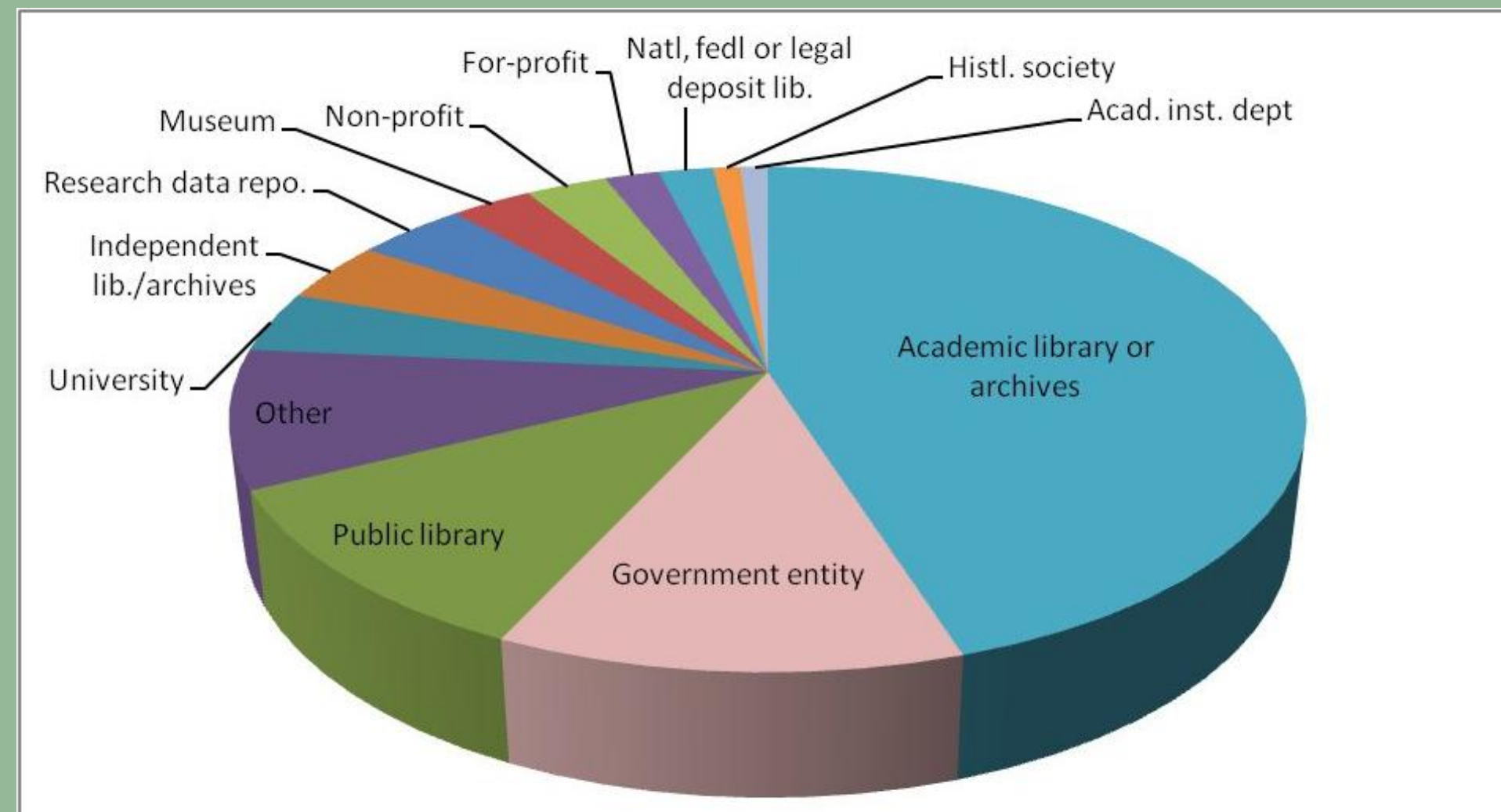


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Survey Goals and Background

Businesses, cultural memory institutions and government bodies that want to responsibly preserve digital assets face significant staffing challenges. The National Digital Stewardship Alliance (NDSA) Standards & Practices Working Group conducted a survey of organizations responsible for digital preservation to gain insight into how organizations worldwide are addressing these staffing, scoping and organizational questions.

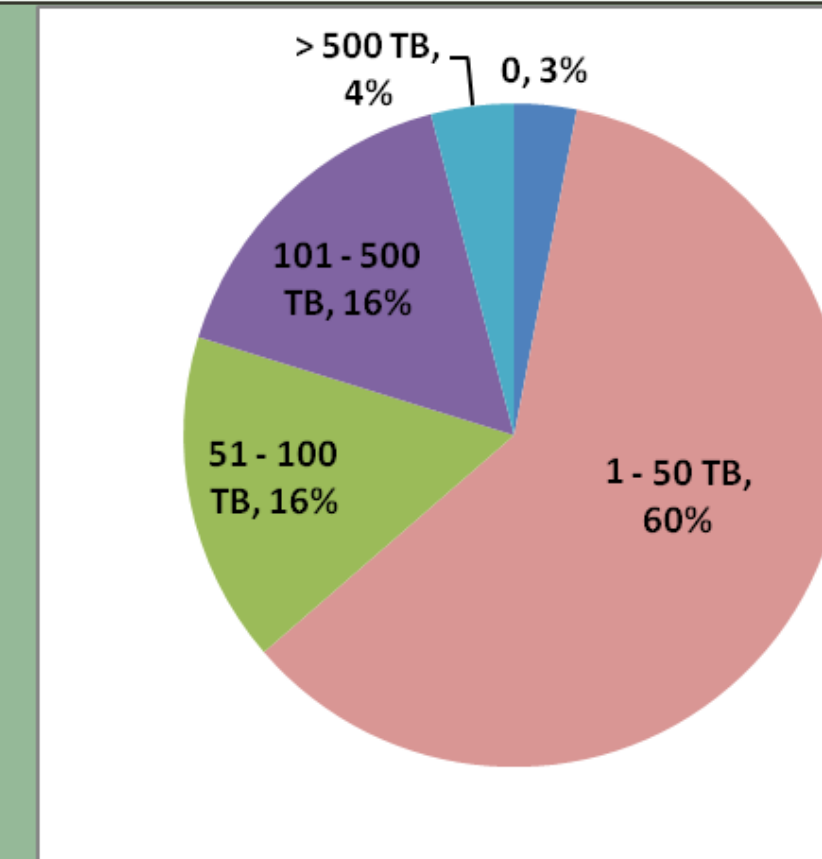
Respondent Characteristics



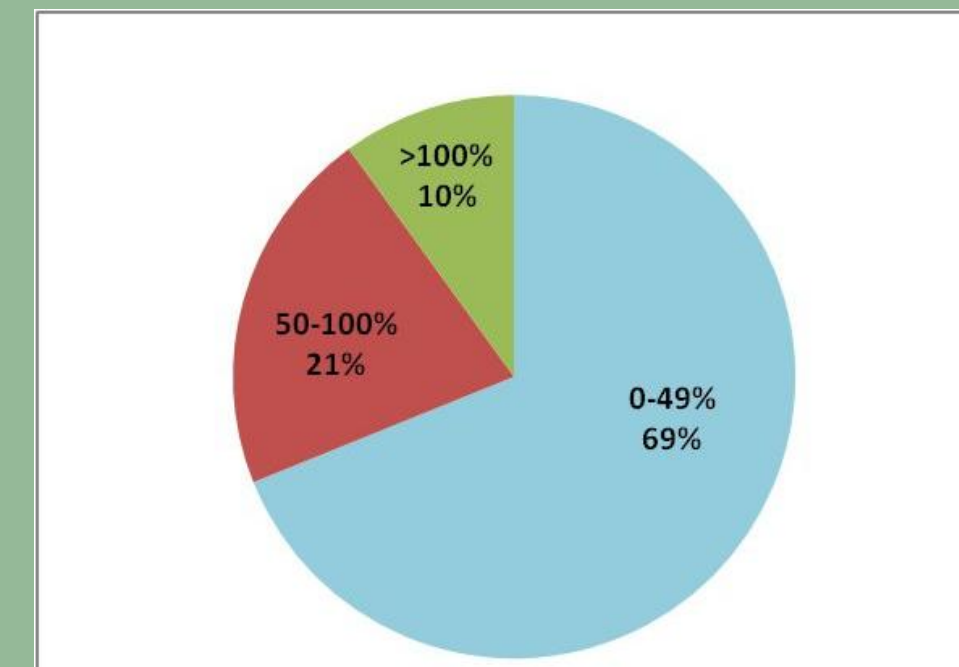
The survey was started 131 times, and completed 85 times (a 65% completion rate).

Most of the respondents were based in the United States (86%), but 8% came from Europe, 4% from Canada, and 1% each from Japan and Australia.

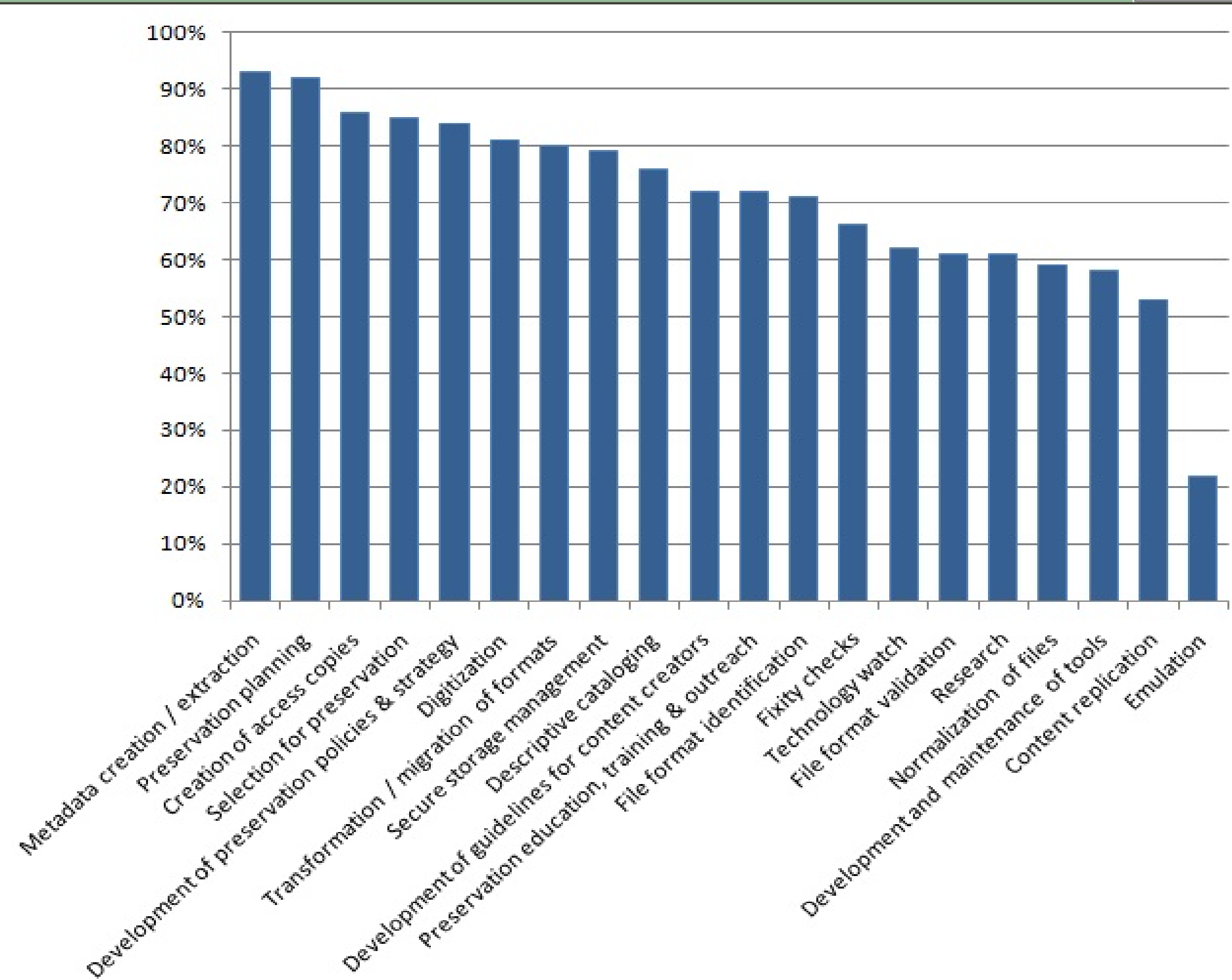
A wide range of institution types responded to the survey, although almost half (47%) of the respondents were academic libraries or archives. The next largest groups of respondents were government entities (11%) and public libraries (10%).



Most respondents are preserving 50 TB or less while 40% are storing over 50 TB of which 16% of those are storing up to 500 TB.



30% of respondents expect a 50% or more increase in the amount of digital content.

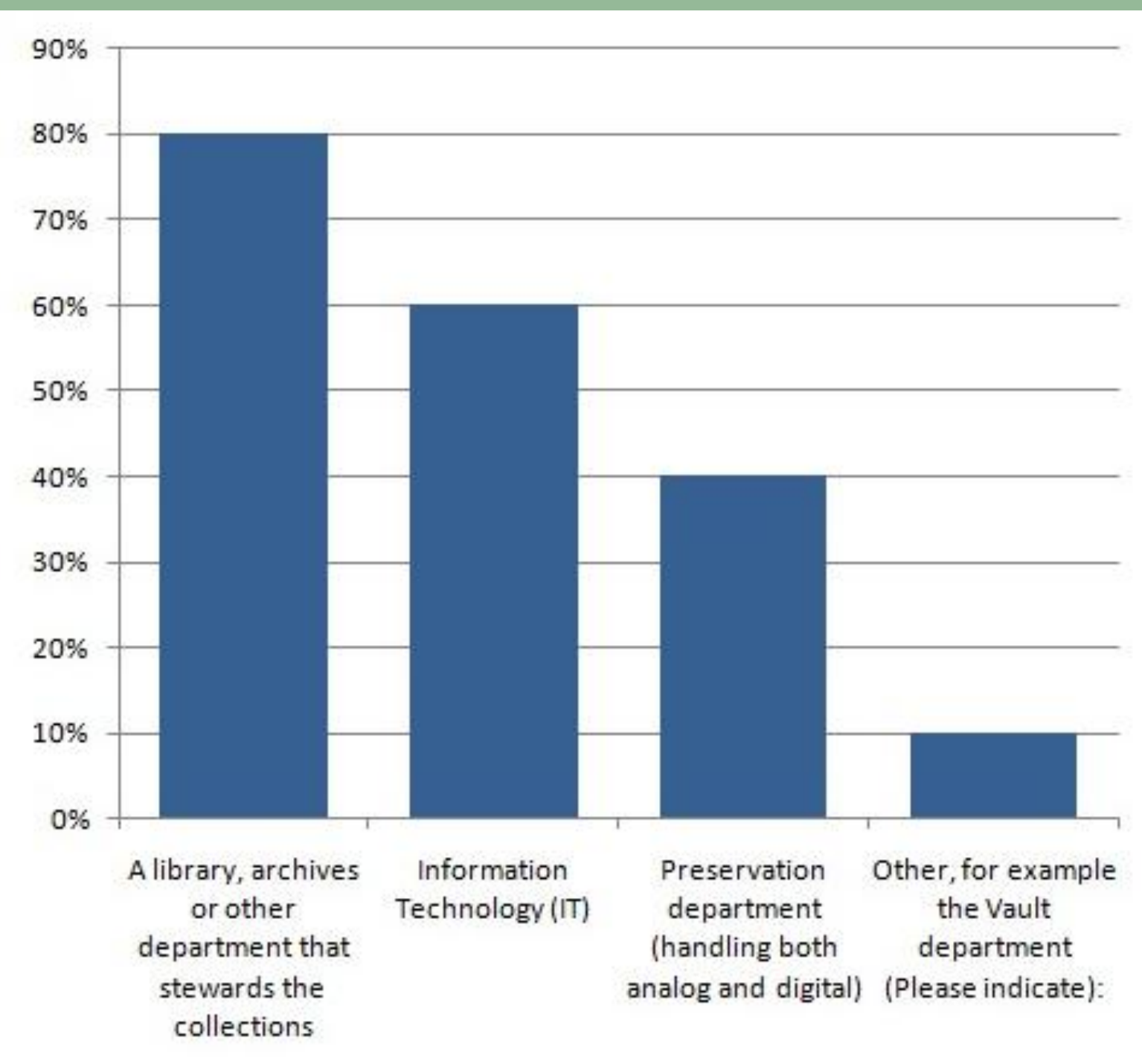


Respondents were asked to identify the functions that are considered part of the scope of their digital preservation function at their institution. They were given a choice of 20 functions, and 19 of these functions were considered in scope for over half of the respondents. Metadata creation/extraction and preservation planning are considered in scope for over 90% of the respondents. Emulation was only considered in scope for 22% of the respondents.

Defining Digital Preservation

What We Have

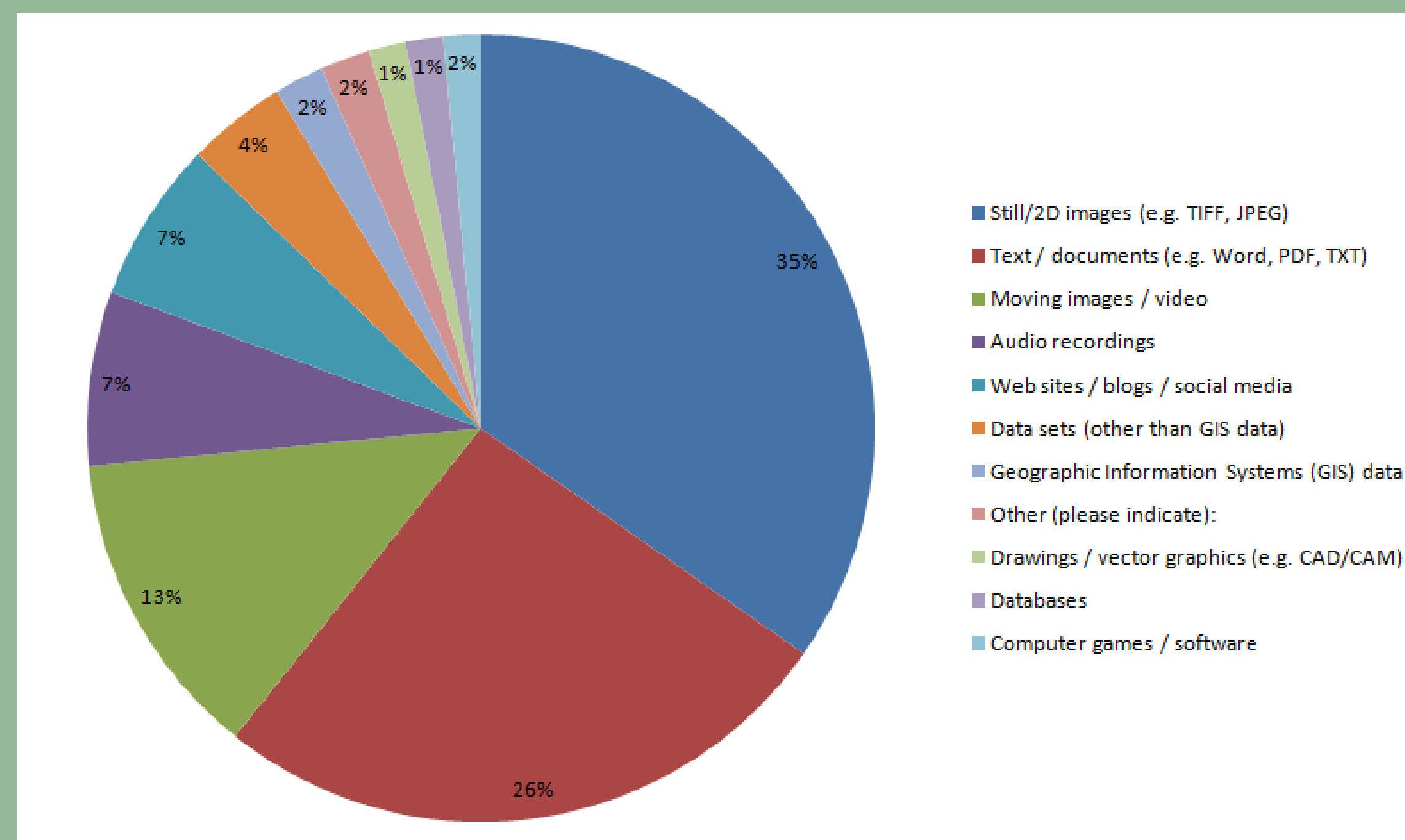
Which Units Do the Work In-house?



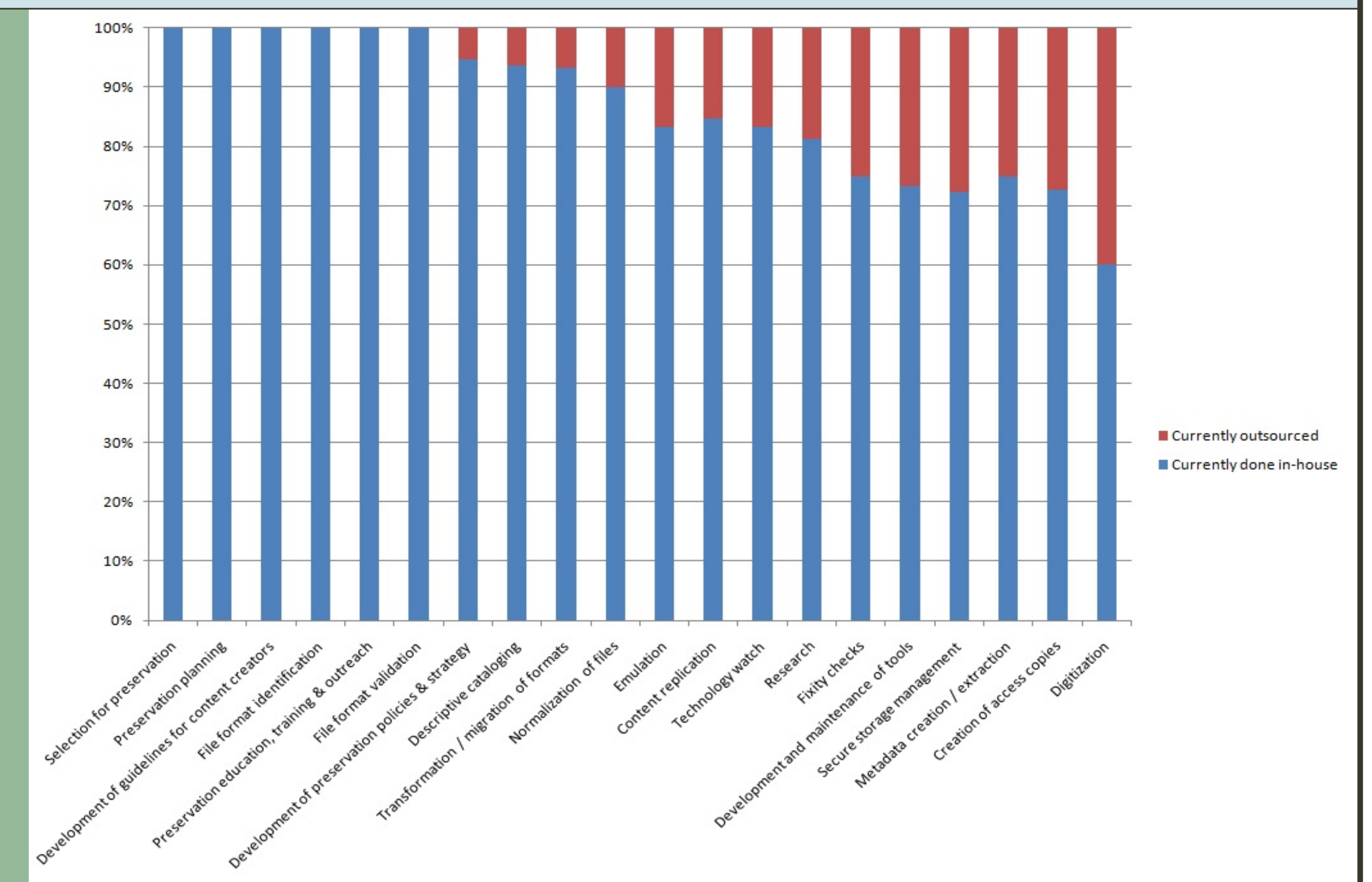
Libraries & Archives tend to take the digital preservation lead within our institutions.

33% of respondents have a dedicated digital preservation department while 59% do not.

What Content Types Are We Preserving?



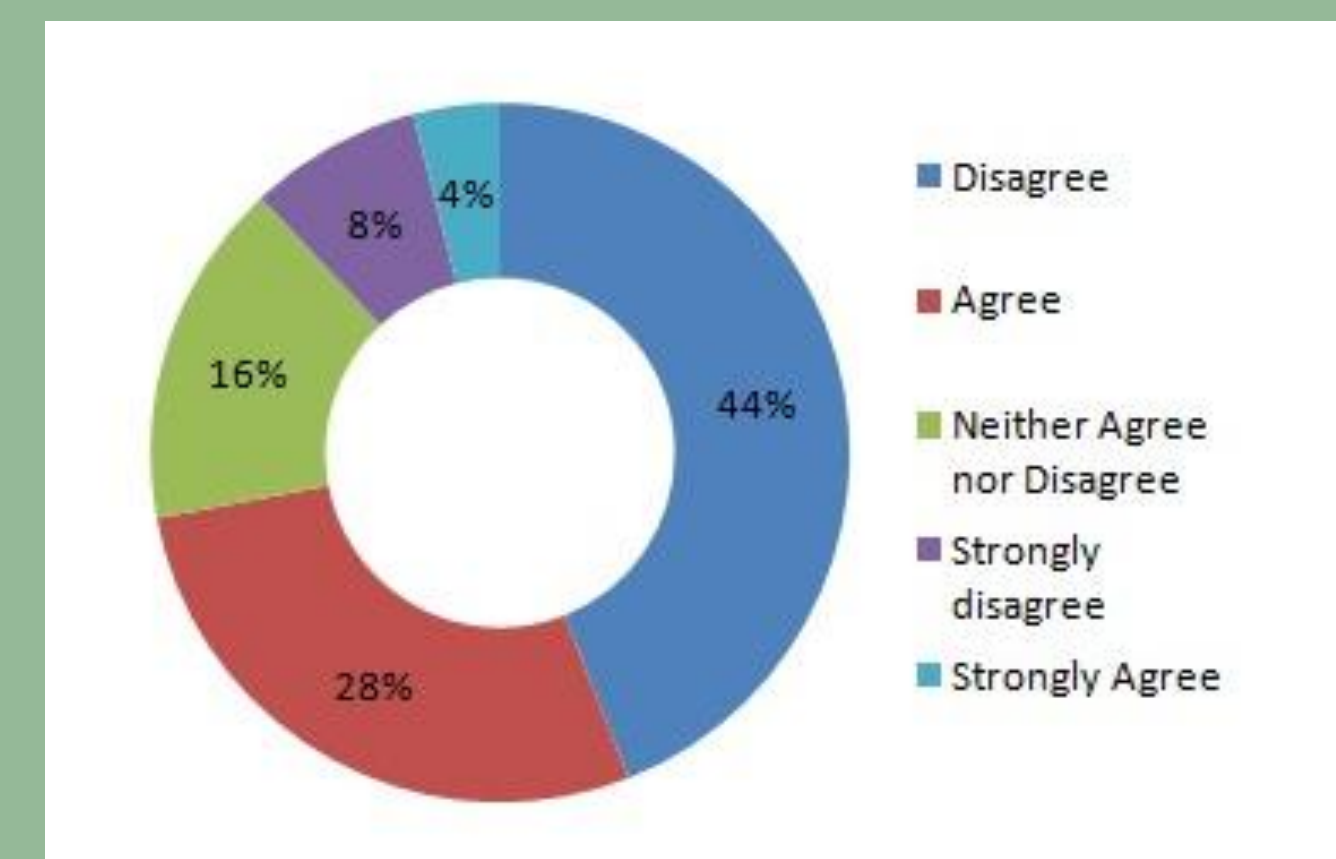
Still images are the most common content type being preserved, followed by textual documents where as databases and computer games/software are among the least preserved content reported.



In-house vs Outsourced Functions

Most institutions do all their digital preservation functions in-house with preservation planning, selection for preservation, development of guidelines for content creators, and development of preservation policies and strategy being done in-house by over 98% of the respondents who are currently doing these functions. Outsourcing tasks is done less frequently but is used for functions such as digitization, secure storage management, and creation of access copies.

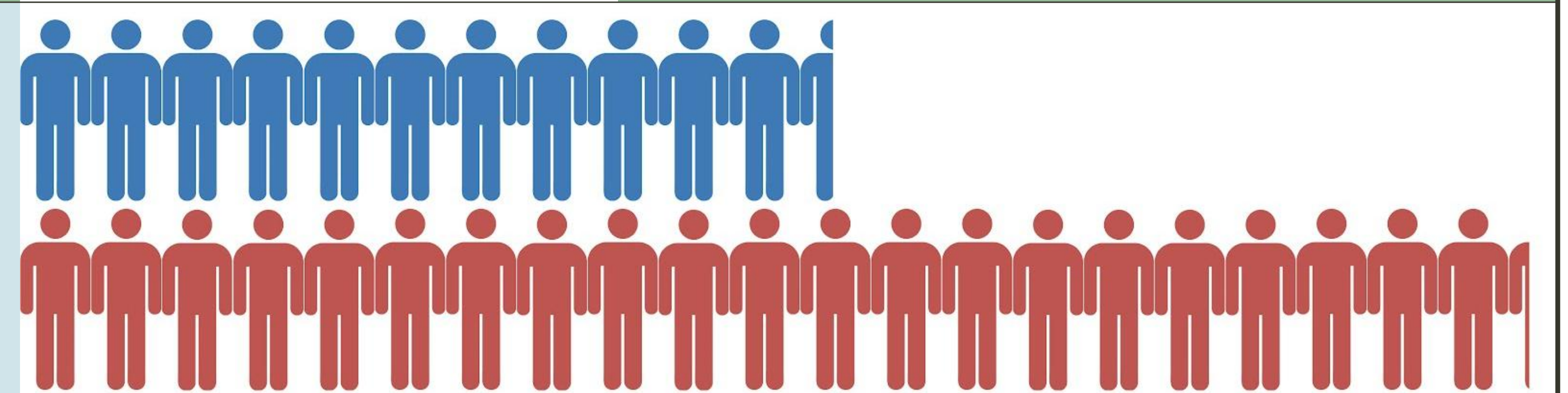
And How is That Working For You?



Respondents who were expecting significant data growth in the next year (>=50%) were far more dissatisfied with their current organizational model for digital preservation than those with less expected data growth. The relatively high response rate for the "neither agree or disagree" option may be an indication of respondents uncertainty about how success in digital preservation is defined and measured.

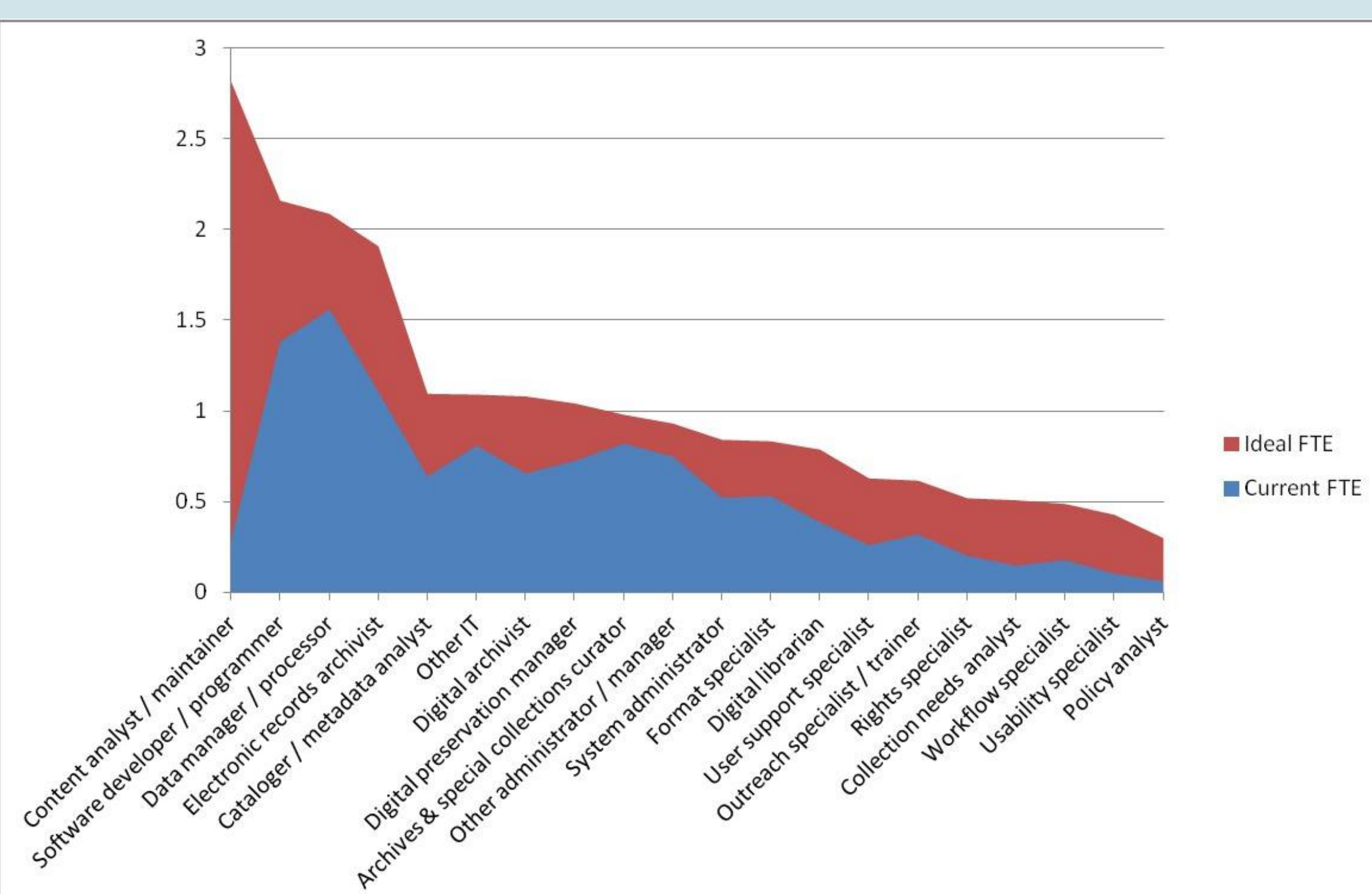
We Need More People!

Most respondents do not think they have the appropriate level of FTE to do digital preservation work successfully. Taking all the positions together, on average institutions have 11.4 FTE doing digital preservation work, but ideally they would like have 21.14 FTE - a gap of 9.73 FTE.



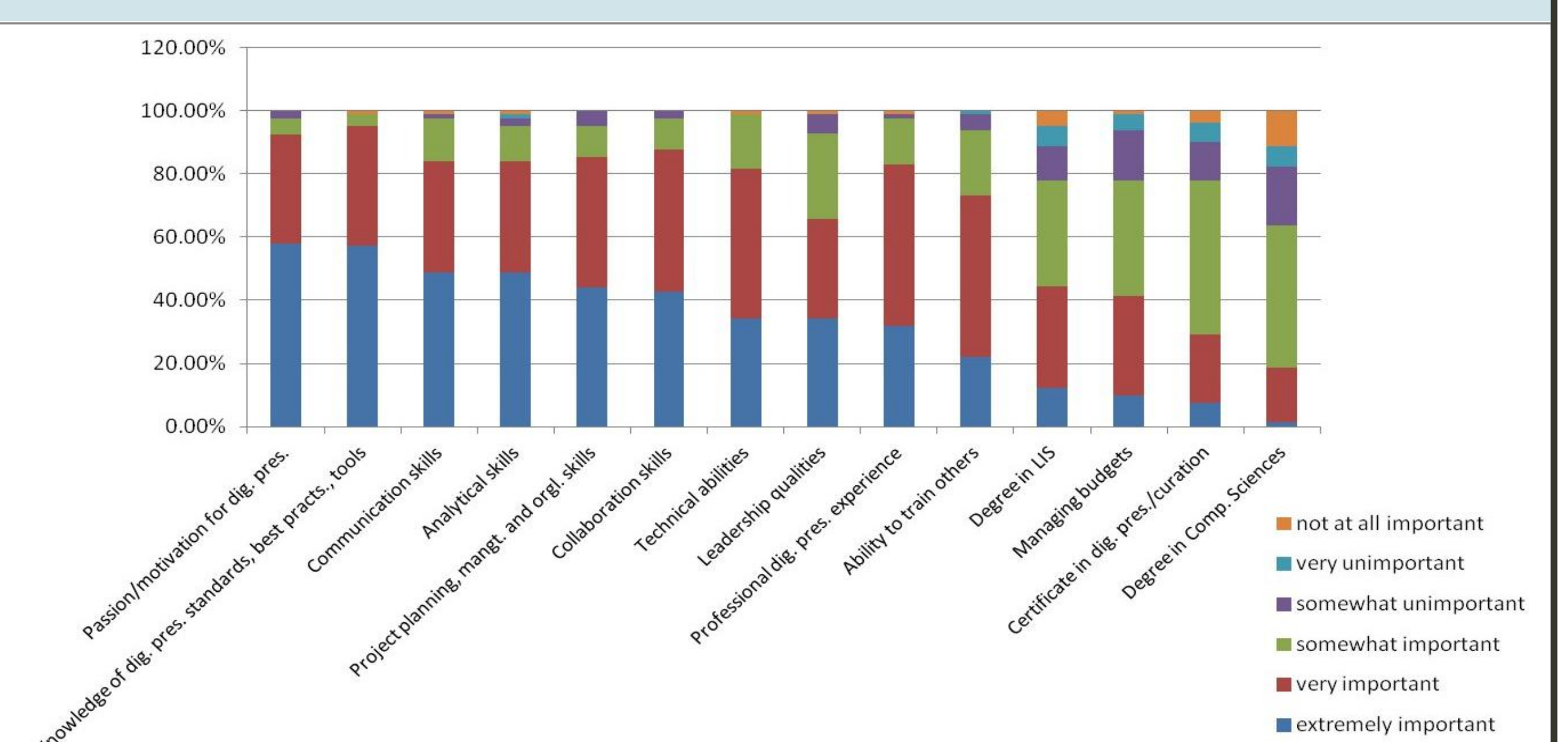
But Not Just Any People: We Need the Right People in the Right Place!

Respondents identified positions whose duties have a direct correlation to content as being the most critical and most understaffed. As content increases, the amount of staff also needs to increase. Positions that do not have a direct correlation with the amount of content generally showed a lower desired number of FTEs.



What Are the Most Desired Skills for Digital Preservation?

The qualification rated the highest for hiring a digital preservation manager is passion/motivation for digital preservation (58% said this is extremely important; 34.57% said it's very important). The second highest rated qualification is knowledge of digital preservation standards, best practices and tools (57.32% said this is extremely important; 37.8% said it's very important). Surprisingly degrees in LIS, Computer Science and/or digital preservation/curation were not rated as highly.



How Do Staff Obtain the Needed Skills?

The large majority (75%) of respondents retrained existing staff to perform digital preservation work while 35% said they hired new experienced staff.